

TOP 12 STORIES OF THE YEAR

Aggieland

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MATT
KENT

AI'S SPORTSPERSON OF THE YEAR



END OF THE YEAR ISSUE • \$3.95



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Aggieland Illustrated's Sportsperson of the Year.

BY ROB HAVENS '88

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On the Cover: Matt Kent, AI's Sportsperson of the Year. Photo by Rob Havens '88.

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Howdy Ags!

Well, it's the end of another sports year and time to look back at the top twelve stories of the year. I hope you enjoy reminiscing as we remind our readers of the stories we covered and the historic events that shaped the '14-'15 school year.

Kyle Field is coming along and, as Coach Sumlin told the world at SEC Media Days, it will be the "Finest College Football Stadium in the country." It is a toss up on what I'm looking forward to most: the beautifully remodeled stadium or the new defense that will take the field under Coach Chavis. Fall camp is upon us and the excitement is growing as experts use the long days of summer to predict how the SEC West Division will pan out. Our next issue will preview the upcoming football season, so if you know an Aggie fan that isn't a current subscriber, now is a great time to give them a gift subscription to our magazine.

This is also our "Sportsperson of the Year" issue. It's always a challenge to choose one amongst so many talented student athletes, but I believe this year's recipient is greatly deserving of the title.

Also, since the last issue, the Aggie Family lost a living legend in John David Crow. What an unbelievable man he was. He was such a big part of this university, and he will be missed. There really aren't enough words to say what he meant to A&M, and our school would not be what it is today without him.

This issue covers the end of the Aggie Baseball season. It was so much fun covering this year's team, from right before the season when the team shaved their heads to raise money to fight children's cancer to the final run in Fort Worth. The team won fifty games, but more importantly, they gave the 12th Man something to talk about every week throughout the spring. It reminded me of the '89 squad that brought so much excitement to Olsen Field. Every time they hit the field, I was confident they could win. They beat some of the best teams in the country and brought a lot of excitement to Blue Bell Park. It was really awesome to see Olsen filled to the max, and a new tradition was born when the team introduced bubbles for big hits. Although they didn't get to Omaha, I believe this record-setting team has reignited the fans' love for Aggie Baseball!

I hope you enjoy this issue, and be sure to tell your friends about Aggieland Illustrated!

Gig'em Ags!

Rob '88



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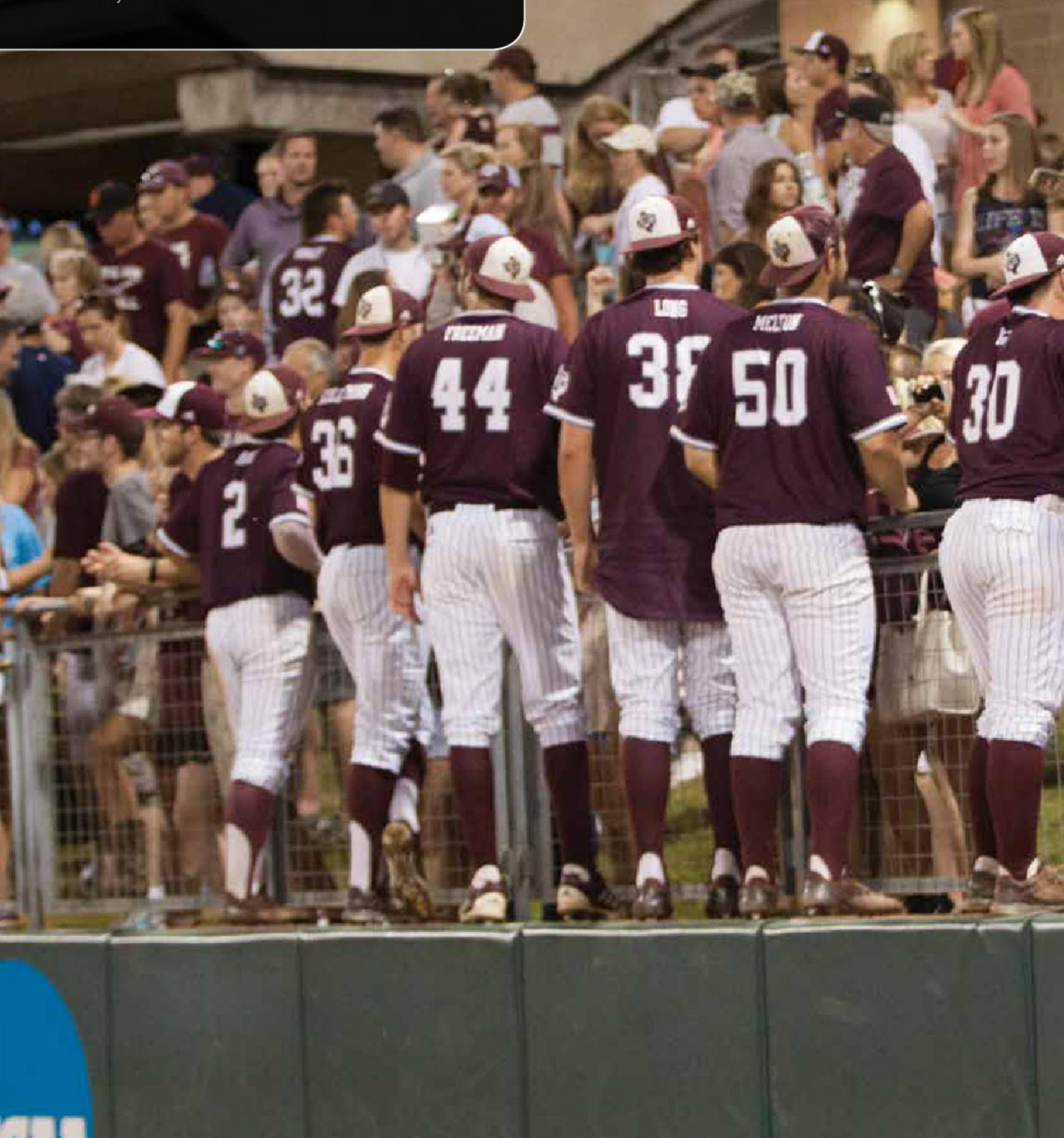
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regional champs...

After losing the second game of the regional, the Aggies had to win three games in a row to win their championship. The team shared the victory with The 12th Man, who shook Bluebell Park during the final home game.

Photo by Rob Havens '88.





College Station
Medical Center



here...

On Wednesday, June 17, 2015 Texas A&M Distinguished Alumnus, Aggie legend, and 1957 Heisman Trophy winner John David Crow passed away at the age of 79. In addition to his many accomplishments on the gridiron, including being A&M's first Heisman winner and the only one that Bear Bryant ever coached, he was instrumental as A&M's Athletic Director in creating successful programs and making women's sports a huge priority on our campus. He touched lives wherever he went and our school would not be the same without all he did for Texas A&M. He will be dearly missed.

Photos courtesy of Aggie Athletics.







9th consecutive year...

The Aggie Women's Track & Field Team finished in third place at this year's NCAA Championships. It was the ninth consecutive year for the Texas A&M women to finish in the top four spots at the NCAA Outdoor Championships.

Photo courtesy of Aggie Athletics.

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[women's track & field] The Women's Track & Field Team placed third in the NCAA Championships. This was the ninth consecutive year for our ladies to finish in the top four. Shamier Little won the national championship in the 400 hurdles for the second year in a row. Shelbi Vaughan also defended her title, winning another "Natty" in the discus throw. The Ags finished only twelve points behind Oregon, who was the winner of the team title. Coach Henry remarked after the meet, "Our team competed very well today. I'm extremely pleased with the way we competed."



[men's track & field] The Men's Track & Field Team finished in sixth place as a team in this year's NCAA Championships. The top finisher for the men was Latario Collie, who finished second in the triple jump. Gregory Coleman finished in fifth place in the 400 hurdles, and the Ags placed fifth in the 4x100 relay and seventh in the 4x400.



scoreboard

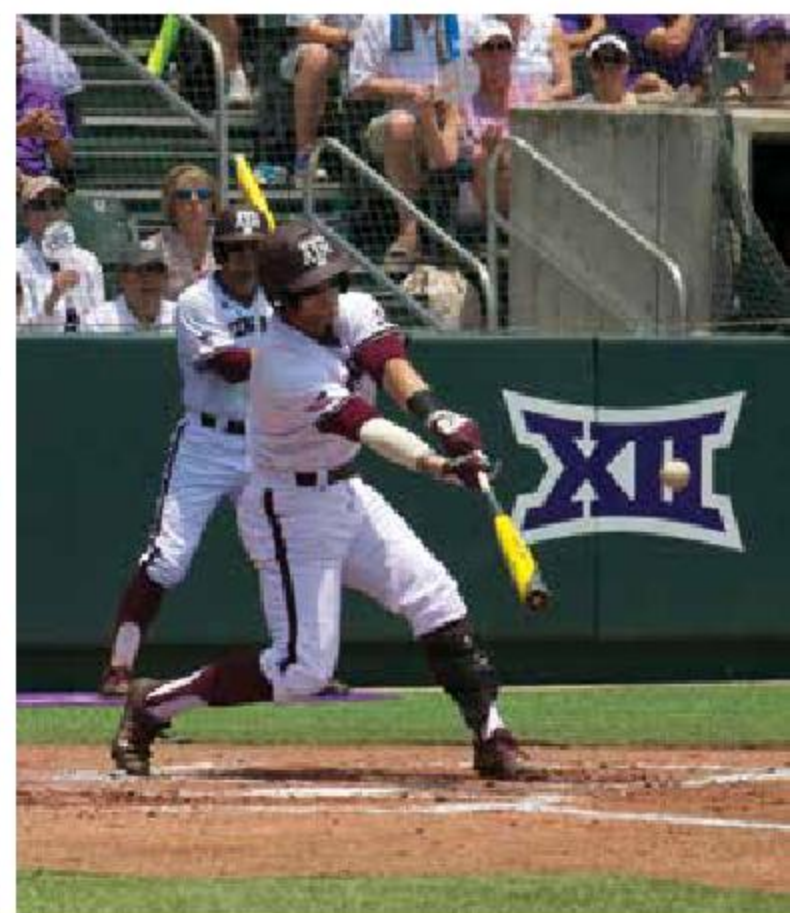
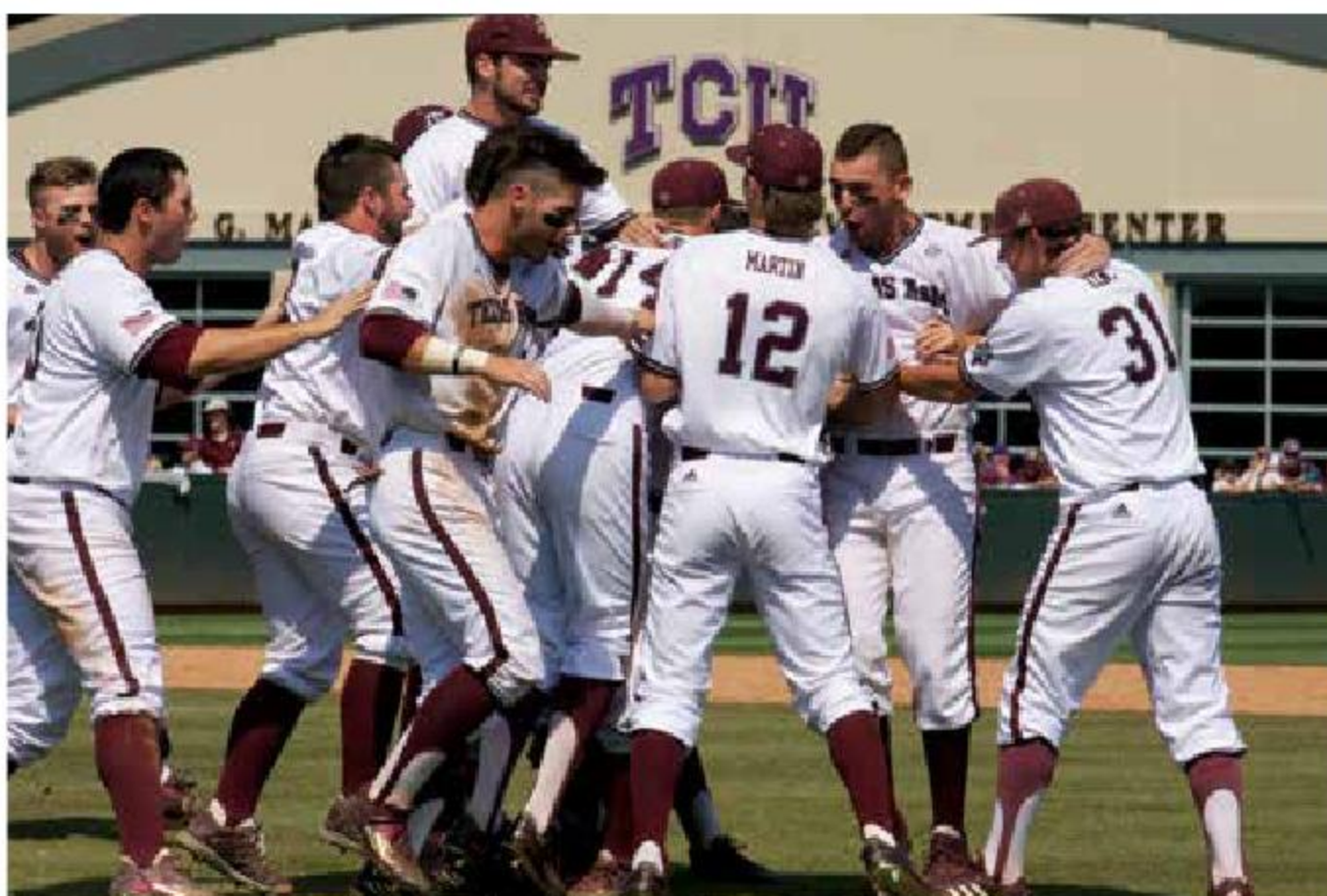


[baseball regional] After a tremendous regular season, the Aggie Baseball Team hosted the 2015 College Station Regional. In the first game, Matt Kent pitched seven no-run innings, leading the team to a 5-0 victory over Texas Southern. Nick Banks' two-run homer put the Ags on the scoreboard, and Andrew Vinson closed out the shutout win. The Ags lost game two to the Cal Bears and fell into the losers bracket. Showing the resiliency of a champion, the Aggies took care of Coastal Carolina 8-1 and won a marathon, twelve-inning affair against Cal 4-3 to advance to the championship game. Returning after only three days of rest, Kent gave the Aggies seven strong innings before giving the ball over to Kyle Simonds, who closed it out. Clutch hitting by Hunter Melton, Jonathan Moroney, Logan Nottbrok, and Michael Barash gave the Aggies a 3-1 victory and a Regional Championship in front of a capacity crowd at Blue Bell Park.





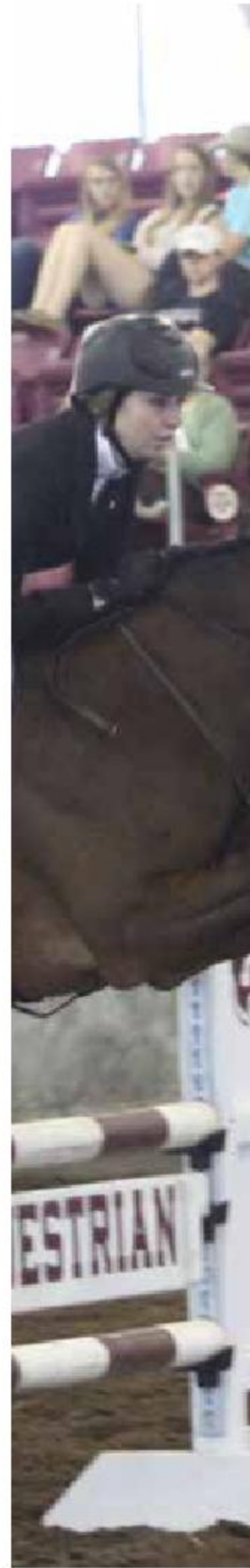
[baseball super regional] After finishing the season with the nation's #5 RPI, expectations were that the Ags would receive a national seed. Unfortunately, the committee did not see it that way and the Aggies were forced to travel to Fort Worth to take on the TCU Horned Frogs. The Ags had a disappointing first game, losing 13-4, and once again, their backs were against the wall. Texas A&M's own Superman, Matt Kent, pitched another gem in game two, throwing 7 & 2/3 innings before turning the ball over to Ryan Hendrix, who closed out the 2-1 victory in ten innings. Blake Allemand took on one of the nation's best closers in Riley Ferrell and flew out to left, sending Nick Choruby home with the winning run in the bottom of the tenth for a wild victory. Unfortunately, the Aggies' luck ran out the next night in a heartbreaking sixteen-inning game that the Frogs won 5-4, ending the Aggies' historic season with a 50-14 record.



TOP 12 STORIES OF

Looking back on Texas A&M athletics in 2014-2015, we give you our picks for the biggest stories of the year.

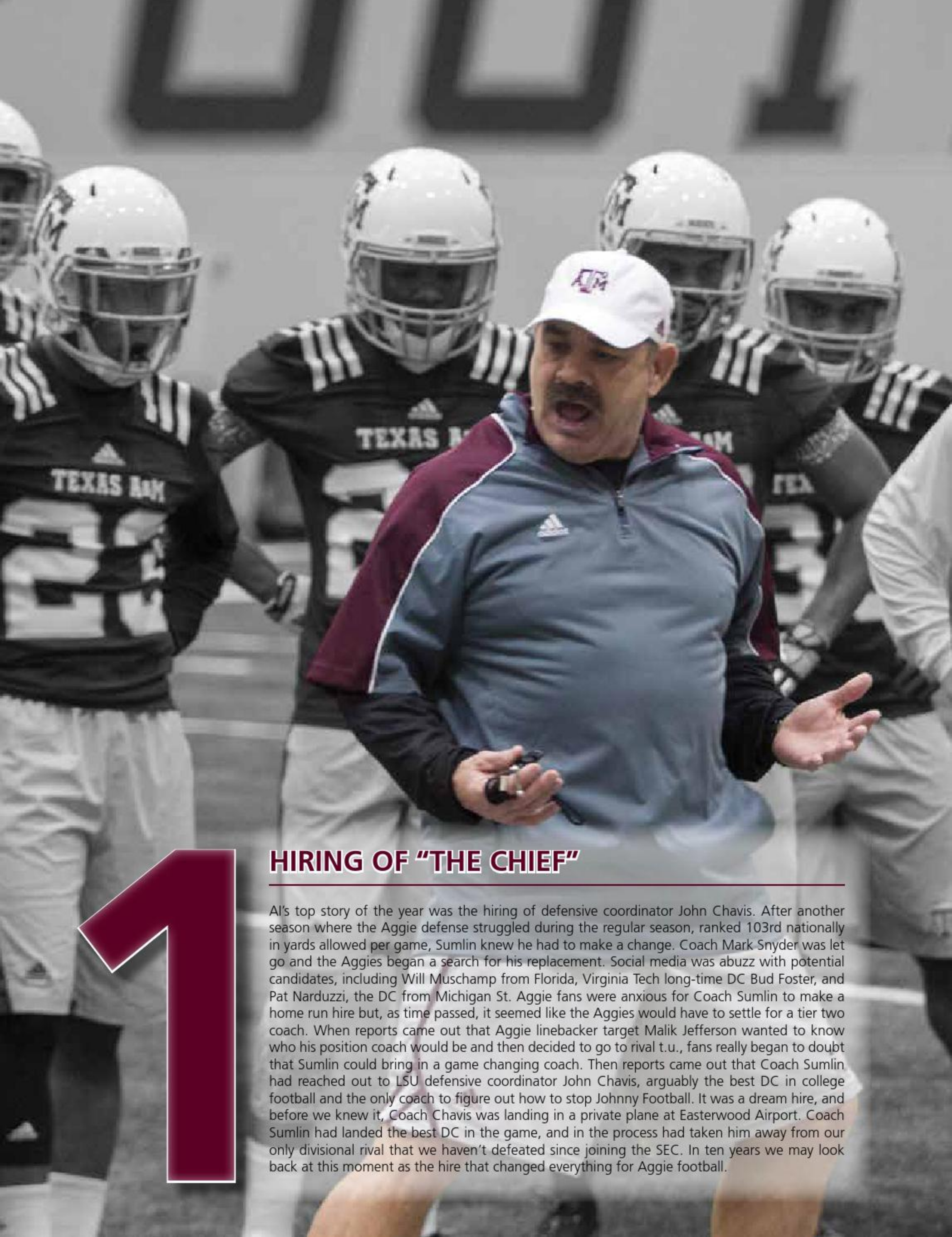
BY ROB HAVENS '88



THE YEAR >>



ROB HAVENS '88 / SARAH PYATT '14



HIRING OF "THE CHIEF"

1 Al's top story of the year was the hiring of defensive coordinator John Chavis. After another season where the Aggie defense struggled during the regular season, ranked 103rd nationally in yards allowed per game, Sumlin knew he had to make a change. Coach Mark Snyder was let go and the Aggies began a search for his replacement. Social media was abuzz with potential candidates, including Will Muschamp from Florida, Virginia Tech long-time DC Bud Foster, and Pat Narduzzi, the DC from Michigan St. Aggie fans were anxious for Coach Sumlin to make a home run hire but, as time passed, it seemed like the Aggies would have to settle for a tier two coach. When reports came out that Aggie linebacker target Malik Jefferson wanted to know who his position coach would be and then decided to go to rival t.u., fans really began to doubt that Sumlin could bring in a game changing coach. Then reports came out that Coach Sumlin had reached out to LSU defensive coordinator John Chavis, arguably the best DC in college football and the only coach to figure out how to stop Johnny Football. It was a dream hire, and before we knew it, Coach Chavis was landing in a private plane at Easterwood Airport. Coach Sumlin had landed the best DC in the game, and in the process had taken him away from our only divisional rival that we haven't defeated since joining the SEC. In ten years we may look back at this moment as the hire that changed everything for Aggie football.



KYLER MURRAY SIGNS

Easily one of the biggest stories of the 14-15 school year was the commitment of Kyler Murray. The son of Aggie legend Kevin Murray had been on the coaching staff's recruiting radar for years. Arguably the best quarterback in Texas high school football history, Kyler won three state championships while attending Allen High. A National Player of the Year recipient, he has all the skills you look for in a dual threat quarterback. Kyler has blazing speed, incredible accuracy, amazing technique, and unprecedented maturity for a high school senior who never lost a game in high school as the starting QB. He verbally committed on May 28, 2014 but social media went crazy when he took a visit to Texas right before signing day. Aggie fans' minds were finally set at ease when he tweeted, "Following my heart...#GigEm," just days before NSD. In addition to being an awesome football player, Kyler is also an outstanding baseball player. He decided to remove his name from MLB draft consideration and play football and baseball at A&M. This story produced ulcers throughout Aggieland. Photo by Sarah Pyatt '14.

2

3



AGGIE FOOTBALL SHOCKS #3 AUBURN

Expectations were through the roof after A&M, with Kenny Hill at the helm, destroyed South Carolina in Columbia to start the season, but a three game skid, along with a change at quarterback and a lack-luster 21-16 win over ULM, had the whole country dismissing the Ags as they rolled into Auburn to play the #3 Tigers. Gus Malzahn had his team in the driver's seat to play in the first CFP to decide the National Champion. The Aggies, led by Kyle Allen, scored on their first two possessions, generating a 14-0 lead. Auburn did not go away and looked to take away the Ags' momentum with a field goal at the end of the half, but Myles Garrett blocked the attempt and Deshaun Everett raced 65 yards for the touchdown to give the team a 35-17 lead. It looked like Auburn would come back, but two late miscues led to turnovers and the Aggies held on to win 41-38. It was the second-highest ranked road victory by the Aggies in program history.
Photo by Aggie Athletics.



AGGIE SOCCER ADVANCES TO COLLEGE CUP

The Women's Soccer Team at A&M has been one of the most consistent winning programs on campus for several years. Regular season and conference tournament championships are expected, but this year's team was finally able to break through the barrier and advance to the final four teams and compete for the College Cup for the first time in program history. As Coach G Guerrieri said, "It was a moment over twenty years in the making." The veteran team including Shea Groom, Allie Bailey, Bianca Brinson, Kelley Monogue, Meghan Streight, Annie Kunz, and Janae Cousineau won their second consecutive SEC regular season crown and tournament championship. The team's 18-2-2 record earned the Aggies their first-ever No. 1 seed. The team was on a mission from day one, and the goal was to get to the College Cup and win it. The Ags won four matches and made it to the Final Four. Unfortunately, they came up just short, losing to Virginia in the semi-final match. This team had an amazing season and made history as the first to get to the College Cup.

Photo by Sarah Pyatt '14.

5

KYLE FIELD IMPLOSION

On a historic Sunday morning in December, Aggies around the world watched on the internet and thousands gathered to see in person as the west side of Kyle Field was imploded to make room for a new structure. Phase II of the \$485 million project went into high gear as the demolition crew fired off explosives that sent the massive structure to the ground in just a few seconds, propelling a wall of dust into the wind over the northwest skies of Aggieland and covering a host of dignitaries positioned above the parking garage across the street for the implosion ceremony. This was truly an amazing event that fans can tell their kids and grandkids about for years to come. After the implosion, trucks carried away debris for several days. Neither the zone nor the new south end zone structure were affected by the blast, and after the dust settled, it was truly a unique sight to see, watching the three-sided structure open view from Wellborn Road. The redeveloped Kyle Field is on schedule to be ready for the Aggies' first home game in 2015.

6

AGGIE BASEBALL TEAM'S 2015 SEASON

Aggie Baseball dominated the headlines throughout the spring and into the summer. The veteran-filled team had high expectations for this season but were met with obstacles along the way, including losing a pair of ace pitchers—Tyler Stubblefield before the first game and AJ Minter just one month into the season. The team overcame those losses and began the season with an SEC record 24-game winning streak. The Aggies moved to the #1 spot in every poll and cruised into conference play undefeated. They battled each weekend against the best baseball conference in the country, posting an 18-10 conference record and a 50-14 record overall. With Grayson Long and Matt Kent dominating on the mound and Blake Allemond, Mitchell Nau, Nick Banks and Logan Taylor excelling at the plate, the Ags fielded one of the most high-powered offenses in school history and a reliable pitching staff on the bump. The team hosted and won their regional, but after being hosed by the selection committee, they had to play their super regional on the road where they fell to TCU in three games. This team, along with the '89 squad, will go down in history as one of the best Aggie baseball teams to never make it to Omaha. They battled through adversity and gave the 12th Man a season to remember.

Photo by Sarah Pyatt '14.



KYLE ALLEN TAKES THE REIGNS AT QUARTERBACK

When Kenny Hill was selected as starting quarterback during fall camp, Kyle Allen was not happy about it. As a competitor, you wouldn't want him to be. But he decided to stay the course, keep working, and be ready when his chance came. After the South Carolina game, his chances of starting didn't look too good. Hill had an amazing game and got the Aggies off to a 5-0 start. But then a three-game skid, including a 59-0 tail whipping from Alabama, and some off-the-field issues crept in and opened the door for Allen to step in. Hill was suspended for two games and Allen stepped in and took the reigns against ULM. Spavital limited the playbook to help the freshmen QB, and Allen got his first win. A week later Kyle led the team into Auburn and upset the #3 team in the country. Allen finished the season as the MVP of the Liberty Bowl, throwing four touchdowns, running for another score, and leading the Ags to a win over the Mountaineers.



4 BOWL WINS IN A ROW

This year's senior class did something no other class in Texas A&M's storied history has ever done: they won four consecutive bowls. In 2011, as freshmen under the direction of interim coach Tim DeRuyter, they outlasted a late rally by the Northwestern Wildcats to win 33-22. Ryan Tannehill threw for 329 yards and a touchdown, and Ben Malena rushed for two more scores to pace the Aggie win. In 2013, newly crowned Heisman winner Johnny Manziel outwitted the experts that said he would lay an egg and blew up the Cotton Bowl record with 516 total yards. The Aggies killed the Sooners 41-13, capping their first SEC season. When they were juniors, they played in the Chick-fil-a Bowl. The Ags rallied in the second half, scoring 35 points in Johnny Manziel's last collegiate game, beating Duke 52-48. Finally, on December 29, 2014 the senior class, led by Kyle Allen, came from behind to beat West Virginia in the Liberty Bowl 45-37. Most Aggie fans are surprised to learn that this is the first time in program history for a class to win four in a row, but this senior class was motivated to make it happen.



AGGIE BASKETBALL SIGNS NATION'S #2 CLASS

Billy Kennedy and his staff didn't have to travel far to reel in the best recruiting class in Aggie Basketball history. For a program that hasn't been to the big dance since 2011, it's pretty amazing that the Aggies signed the #2 class in the nation. Members of this year's class turned down basketball powerhouse schools like Kentucky, Florida, UConn and Louisville, just to name a few. All four signees are from the DFW area. The Ags added size inside with Tyler Davis and Elijah Thomas, who possess next-level talent. They can score, rebound, and provide toughness inside. Admon Gilder might be the best scoring guard in the state of Texas. He can create his own shot and score from anywhere on the floor. DJ Hogg has the talent and ability to be one of the best players in the country. The kid can score and should be a difference maker as soon as he steps on the floor. All four of these young men have the ability to play in the NBA. They should be fun to watch.



7TH AGGIE TAKEN IN THE FIRST ROUND OF THE NFL DRAFT IN THE LAST 5 YEARS

Cedric Ogbuehi continued a streak of Aggie first round selections when he was chosen by the Cincinnati Bengals with the 21st overall pick of the NFL Draft. After tearing his ACL in the Liberty Bowl, some experts thought he might drop out of the first round altogether. But the talented lineman has shown the ability to play multiple spots on the line, finishing his Aggie career at left tackle—a coveted role that NFL scouts look for. Ogbuehi could have made himself available last year but decided to comeback and develop his skills at the left tackle position. By being drafted in the first round, Ced joins a talented Aggie fraternity that has been picked in the opening round in the past five years. Von Miller started the streak when he was taken second overall in 2011. In 2012, Ryan Tannehill was picked up by the Dolphins with the eighth pick. Luke Joeckel continued the streak in 2013 when the Jaguars drafted him with the second pick. In 2014, three Aggies were taken in the first round: Jake Matthews at six for the Falcons, Mike Evans with the 7th pick for the Buccaneers, and Johnny Manziel with the 22nd pick by the Browns. If you want to play in the NFL, Texas A&M is the place to start your career.

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A male tennis player in a white Texas A&M shirt and cap is captured mid-swing, hitting a backhand shot with intense focus and effort. The background is a blurred tennis court.

11

MEN'S TENNIS WINS TWO SEC CROWNS

The Aggie Men's Tennis Team is filling the trophy case with SEC Championship trophies. Last year they won the SEC tournament trophy, and this year they defended their title and added the regular season crown as well. Hosting this year's conference tourney, the men advanced to the championship match where they took on the #5 ranked Georgia Bulldogs. In an exciting match where the Aggies looked as if the title might slip away, they were blessed with a lightning and rain delay that allowed them to gain their composure. After the two hour delay, the Ags dominated, winning six straight games and clinching their second title. Senior Jeremy Efferding was named the tournament MVP after closing out the final match with a 6-7(2), 6-1, 7-5 victory. The Aggies earned a sixth seed in the NCAA Tournament. They defeated Eastern Kentucky, Oklahoma State, and Ohio State to advance to the Elite 8 for only the second time in program history. Unfortunately, the men's season came to an end when they lost to #3 Virginia in their final match.

A female track athlete in a white Texas A&M jersey is shown in a dynamic pose, possibly celebrating or preparing for a throw, with her arms outstretched. She is wearing a white wristband and a watch. The background is a chain-link fence.

12

AGGIE TRACK EARNS 28 FIRST- TEAM ALL-AMERICAN HONORS

In addition to the Women's Track Team finishing third place in team competition and the Men's Track Team finishing sixth, the Aggies earned twenty-eight first-team All-American honors at this year's NCAA Championships. The women garnered the most first-team honors with fifteen All-Americans among nine athletes, while the men received thirteen first-team honors among eleven athletes, equaling the third highest total. Aaliyah Brown and Kamaria Brown each earned three first-team honors. For her career, Kamaria holds the second highest number in school history with sixteen All-American honors. Moving to the top of the men's all-time list with thirteen was Deon Lendore, who earned honors in the 400 and 4X100. On the women's team, Shamier Little won her second consecutive National Championship in the 400 hurdles, and Shelbi Vaughan defended her National Championship in the discus throw. The top finisher for the men was Latario Collie, who finished second in the triple jump.

Photo by Errol Anderson.

MATT

AGGIELAND ILLUSTRATION



It's always a difficult

challenge to select Aggieland Illustrated's Sportsperson of the Year.

Texas A&M is blessed to have talented and nationally acclaimed athletes in every sport. This year's selection was instrumental in the success of the '15 Aggie Baseball Team. The '14-'15 Aggie Sportsperson of the Year is junior left-handed pitcher Matt Kent.

The 6-foot, 175-pound student-athlete came to Texas A&M from just up Highway 6 in Waco, Texas. He's not an intimidating figure in stature, and he looks very young, but he's very polite and when you talk to him you can tell he's very intelligent. He's not the kind of pitcher that gets on the mound and throws 90-mph stuff and blows you away. Topping out at 86 or 87 mph with his fastball, Kent relies on placement, movement and, finally, velocity to strike batters out.

Much like a surgeon who plans and then executes the procedure, Matt is a surgeon on the bump. He plans out how to pitch to each batter and then hits his spots and reacts to the batter's swing to determine which pitch he should throw next. In modern day baseball, guys can hit pitchers throwing 100 mph, but Matt makes guys hit the pitches he wants them to hit and analyzes his way through the game. After his playing days are over, Matt has the ability and pitcher's IQ to be an excellent pitching coach.

During the season, Coach Childress allowed Kent to call his own game at times, which shows the confidence he has in the young lefty. Before the season began, Matt was the first player that was made available to the media. With his success mostly out of the bullpen the last two years and a veteran returning

KENT

ED'S SPORTSPERSON OF THE YEAR

BY ROB HAVENS '88

offense, I was surprised to see him as the voice of the team. But he spoke with eloquence and a team-first mentality that showed me why Rob would have him talk to us first.

Kent started this season as the Sunday guy. He ate up innings getting opponents to ground out, fly out, and occasionally strike out. He confounded batters with his sub-90-mph stuff and started the season with a 6-0 record. During the middle of the season, he had a few tough outings in which he had no decisions and coach moved him back to the bullpen—a move he later recalled that really helped him as he had gotten away from doing the things that had made him successful.

Matt got back into the starting lineup and suffered his only loss of the season to Arkansas. After a couple more successful appearances out of the bullpen, Coach Childress called on Kent for the biggest game of the season so far. With a Super Regional bid at stake, the Aggies took on Vanderbilt in the SEC Tourney. The Ags needed a win to have any chance

of securing that bid. Matt went out and faced Carson Fulmer, the best pitcher in the nation. He pitched a complete game four-hitter against one of the best offenses in college baseball. He allowed only one run to the Commodores, who eventually became the runners-up in the College World Series.

Unfortunately, the Ags did not get a national seed. They did host a regional, and a week after his huge victory over Vandy, Kent pitched another gem over Texas Southern, giving the Ags their first win. He pitched seven innings and allowed no runs in Texas A&M's 5-0 win. Three days later, Kent was called on again as the Ags needed one more victory to advance to the Super Regional. With only three days rest, Kent threw another seven innings, gave up one run, and propelled the Aggies to a 3-1 victory over the Bears.

The win over Cal gave Matt a 9-1 record on the year and the Aggies moved on to Fort Worth to take on TCU. In his final outing of the season, Kent pitched 7

and 2/3 innings, giving up no runs in the second game of the Super, helping the Aggies win a ten-inning game 2-1.

Experts around the country said Matt Kent was the hottest pitcher in the nation at the end of the year. He did a phenomenal job winning big game after big game. Coming back on short rest and winning two games, he was named MVP of the College Station Regional. Although he didn't get the W on the stat sheet, his performance in game two was the difference that gave the Aggies the win.

AI is proud to name Matt Kent as its Sportsperson of the Year. He showed the heart of a champion all year. He also battled through adversity and came through on the other side. He was a difference maker on the mound in the Aggies' biggest games at the end of the season. Matt was drafted in the 13th round of the MLB Draft by the Boston Red Sox. We look forward to cheering him on, and we wish him good luck as he pursues his professional career. ■







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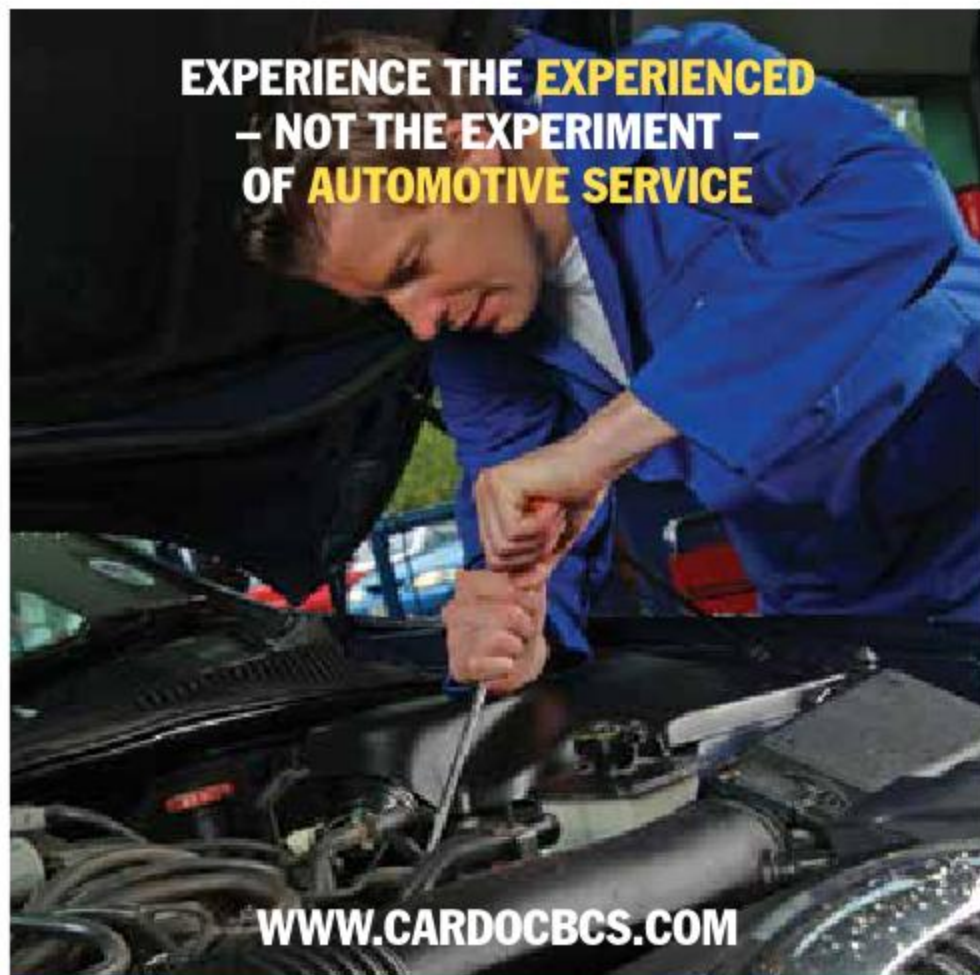
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